

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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SECRETINFORMATION

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APPLY

August 4, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE *HK*

SUBJECT: Enemy Preparations for MR 3 Offensive
and Ceasefire

Several reports provide increasing indications that the enemy is preparing a major round of attacks against areas surrounding Saigon in August and September. These reports suggest that the enemy plans to interdict Saigon's main lines of communications, to seal off the Delta and to seize as much territory as possible in the MR 3 area. They accord with a major COSVN assessment published in mid-July which calls for a general offensive to force President Nixon's electoral defeat and acceptance of the 7 Point proposal.

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The fact that COSVN reportedly is preparing a major effort against Saigon's environs is a further indication that the VC/NVA are aiming for a ceasefire in the near future. If successful, their plan would achieve one of the enemy's essential pre-conditions for an in-place ceasefire -- the control of the roads leading to the Capital and thus Saigon's economy.

Particularly significant is a July 21 report from the Thu Bien Subregion, covering Saigon's northern suburbs, which mentions COSVN guidance on seizing selected key areas around Saigon before a ceasefire is declared. The report also urges the formation of special action teams to recruit GVN cadre for service during a coalition government period.

Another report provides information on a July 21 briefing in a different Saigon suburb which calls for an increase of political struggles in the areas bordering Saigon. The briefer, who apparently based his presentation on a COSVN resolution (No. 5, dated June 2) also ordered the formation of a new administrative organ, "Steering Committees" with overall supervision of activities in a group of five or more villages.

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Similarly, on July 10 a Saigon city precinct-level cadre stated that the enemy's 5th, 7th and 9th Divisions would conduct operations in MR 3 and 4 to seize control of strategic highway 4 and thus close GVN lines of communication to the Delta. The cadre also stated that a recent briefing at a secret base predicted a political solution in the near future.

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the enemy also plans heavy attacks against Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia provinces in MR 3 northwest of Saigon.